From: Association of Deputy District Attorneys
To: Daniel Cohen
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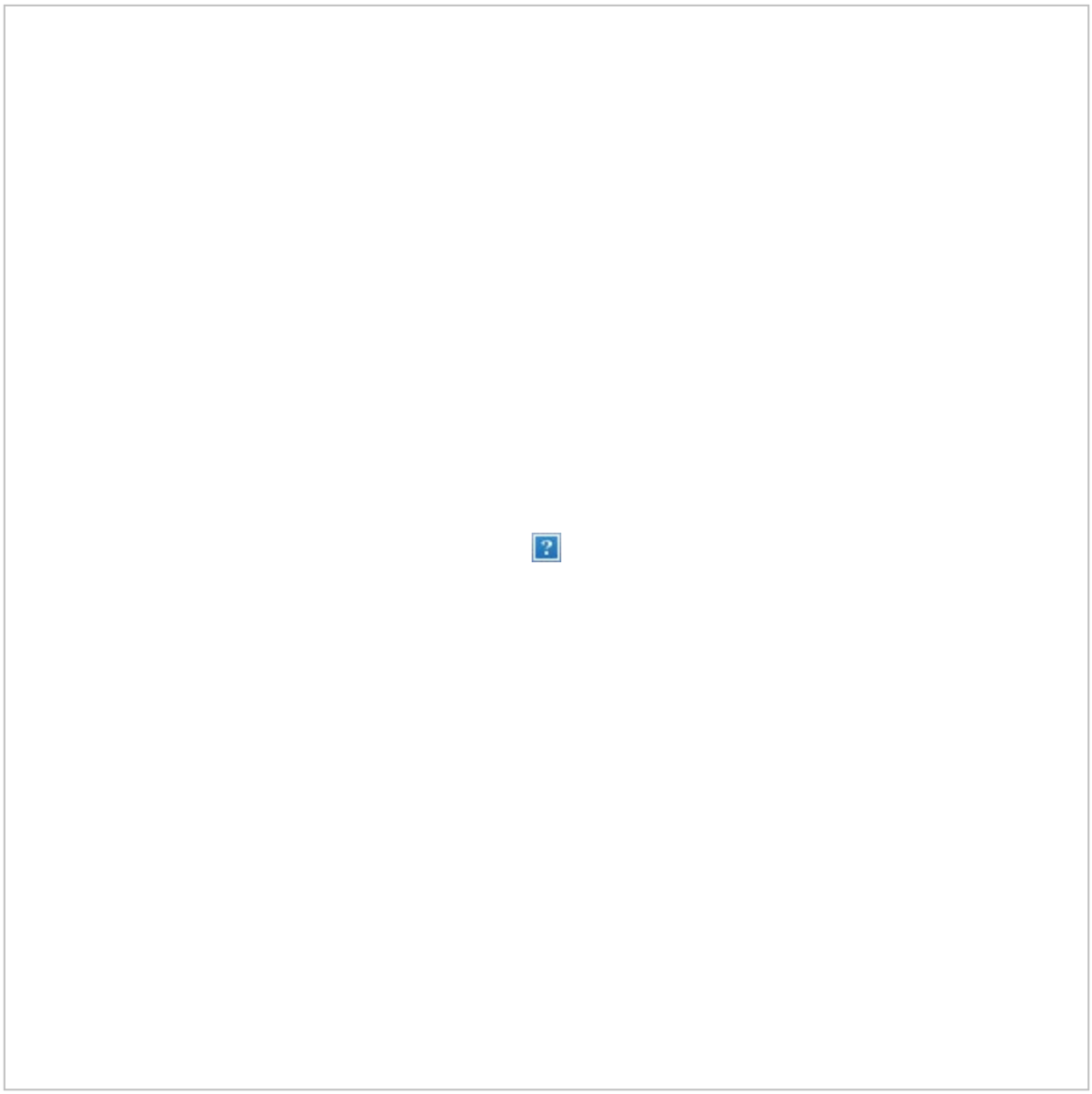

COVID-19 & Justice System

Coronavirus and jails: California Supreme Court rejects prisoner release lawsuit

The California Supreme Court refused Monday to order state officials to

release large numbers of inmates from local jails and juvenile detention centers to ease crowded conditions that spread the coronavirus. The court redirected inmate advocates to the counties that run the facilities, but did not rule out further lawsuits against the state.
San Francisco Chronicle

Judge who ordered ICE to release California immigrants overruled; detainees will stay put
A panel of three 9th Circuit Court of Appeals judges on Tuesday overruled a lower court's order to significantly reduce the number of detainees held at the Adelanto ICE Processing Facility northeast of Los Angeles. The decision by judges Barry Silverman, Jacqueline Nguyen and Daniel Collins came in response to an emergency request by the Trump administration to halt the April 23 preliminary injunction ruling by U.S. District Judge Terry Hatter while it appeals his order.
Los Angeles Times

Supreme Court hears first arguments via phone
Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. played traffic cop. Justice Clarence Thomas asked his first questions in more than a year. Justice Sonia Sotomayor disappeared for a few moments, apparently having failed to unmute her phone. On the whole, the Supreme Court's first argument held by telephone went smoothly, with the justices asking short bursts of quick questions, one by one, in order of seniority, as the world, also for the first time, listened in.
New York Times

Justice can't be muted? Flushing sound heard on Supreme Court conference call
A Supreme Court argument showed Wednesday that it's not just office co-workers who sometimes have difficulty finding the "mute" button during a conference call. Amid oral arguments in Barr v. American Association of Political Consultants, an unexpected sound projected clearly across the court's live audio stream: Someone flushed a toilet.
NBC News

LA authorities agree to release more than 250 inmates from jails
The presiding judge of Los Angeles County announced Friday that more than 250 inmates facing misdemeanor and lower-level felony charges have been ordered released from jail to limit the spread of coronavirus by reducing the number of people behind bars. In a written statement, Presiding Judge Kevin C. Brazile said orders have been signed to release more than 250 people on their own recognizance in connection with the Judicial Council of California's recent decision to set bail at zero for most misdemeanor and lower-level felony cases.
City News Service

Parolee released due to coronavirus commits another crime, Glendale police say

A 56-year-old parolee was arrested after officers found him rolled up in carpeting at a commercial burglary in Glendale - hours after he was arrested for two misdemeanor counts but let go due to the city's emergency "zero" dollar bail schedule, police said Saturday. David Frakes was released from his first offense early Friday due to the city's emergency protocol designed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in jails, said Kaila Olander of the Glendale Police Department.
City News Service

Southern District of California 'business as usual' during pandemic
Unlike its state court neighbor across the street, the Southern District of California is operating business as usual during the pandemic, with 90% of its clerk's office staff teleworking from home to process the constant flow of civil filings still coming in. In a State of the Southern District address Friday hosted by the San Diego chapter of the Federal Bar Association, judicial leaders from San Diego's federal court revealed it is still operating much the same as before stay-at-home orders were issued to curb the spread of Covid-19, though it has much less foot traffic in the palatial building.
Courthouse News Service

Businesses eager to reopen but worried of torts to follow
In a country still very much in the muck of a global pandemic, the tide of business reopenings is likely to carry with it a new problem of coronavirus-related lawsuits. This impending wave of torts spurred a signal flare from the National Association of Manufacturers and several other trade groups, which asked House and Senate leaders Friday to enact "limited and rational safe harbors" that would curtail any "misguided litigation."
Courthouse News Service

Southern California man first to be federally charged for hawking fake COVID-19 cure
Federal prosecutors charged a man in Southern California for hawking a fake cure for the coronavirus and soliciting investors into a company to market the phony treatment. In a statement, the Justice Department said Keith Lawrence Middlebrook was arrested after trying to sell pills to an undercover agent that was posing as an investor.
Scripps National

Newsom welcomes 'new partners' in coronavirus supply deals: federal investigators
As feds probe, Newsom labeled big coronavirus supply deals gone awry "cautionary tales" and said they were averted in time to avoid costing taxpayers. At least California didn't lose its half-billion dollars. That was the quasi-upbeat message Gov. Gavin Newsom delivered today over the mounting scandal surrounding a politically-connected medical supply company now reported to be under federal investigation.

CalMatters

California cold case rape suspect released over coronavirus exposure concerns, police 'shocked'
Authorities in Northern California are blasting the decision by a local judge to release a 61-year-old suspect in a pair of cold case rapes over concerns about the spread of coronavirus at an area jail. Gregory Paul Vien, 61, was charged last November in connection with two separate sexual assaults from 1997 after police linked DNA from the crime scenes to that of a sample collected from a Baskin-Robbins ice cream spoon.
Fox News

Defense wants mistrial in Robert Durst's trial because of coronavirus delay
Robert Durst's attorneys are asking a judge to declare a mistrial in his murder case, contending that a lengthy delay caused by the coronavirus pandemic "has made it impossible" for the New York real estate scion to get a fair trial on a charge that he killed his longtime friend at her home in the Benedict Canyon area of Los Angeles.
City News Service

DA wants some witnesses in Robert Durst's trial to testify via videoconference
Prosecutors in Robert Durst's murder trial filed papers Friday asking that some witnesses be allowed to testify through video conferencing instead of appearing in court before jurors in a case in which the New York real estate scion is charged with killing his longtime friend at her home in the Benedict Canyon area of Los Angeles.
My News LA

California pushes back bar exam for attorneys because of coronavirus pandemic
For the first time, the California bar exam will go online in September, replacing the traditional in-person setting which was to take place in July. The California Supreme Court last week ordered a delay in the final testing ground for law school graduates to enter the industry because of shelter-in-place orders prompted by the coronavirus outbreak.
North Bay Business Journal

Courts & Rulings

Clarification may be sought of possible refusal to talk
A divided California Supreme Court yesterday upheld a 2003 death sentence, rejecting the view of two justices that the defendant's confession to an uncharged murder was improperly admitted during the penalty phase because questioning by a law enforcement officer should have ceased when the suspect said "no" or "nah" when asked if he were willing to talk about the matter.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Parks agency gets the stick for giving tour companies free rein
From the Great Smoky Mountains to Hawaii volcanoes, the D.C. Circuit is clamping down on helicopter tours over national parks, ordering federal agencies to enforce regulations ignored for nearly two decades. "Left to their own devices, the agencies have failed to comply with their statutory mandate for the past nineteen years," Friday's decision from the federal appeals court states.
Courthouse News Service

Conviction reversed based on denial of confrontation right
Div. Eight of the Court of Appeal for this district has held, in a 2-1 decision, that if the prosecution knows that one of its witnesses at the preliminary hearing might not be available at trial, it must alert the defense, in writing, to that fact, and take other steps to avoid the defendant being deprived of the right of confrontation. Justice John Sheppard Wiley wrote the majority opinion in which Justice Maria Stratton joined.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Appeals court reinstates California law requiring background checks for ammo purchases
A federal appeals court reinstated a California background-check requirement for ammunition purchases this week after another court had deemed the law unconstitutional and a violation of the Second Amendment. U.S. District Judge Roger Benitez in San Diego called the regulations "onerous and convoluted," but the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco disagreed and granted the state's request to stay the order, according to the National Rifle Association (NRA).
Fox News

Court of Appeal gives third victory to stuttering prison guard
Div. Three of the Fourth District Court of Appeal yesterday gave a prison guard who sued over discrimination based on his stuttering his third appellate victory, this time holding that he was short-changed by a Superior Court judge who awarded slightly in excess of $800,000 in attorney fees when he had sought roughly $2.4 million. Acting Presiding Justice Eileen Moore wrote the opinion, which was not certified for publication.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Courts issue rulings in two cases challenging law enforcement searches of license plate databases
This week, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued an opinion in United States v. Yang, a case challenging the search of an automated license plate reader database under the Fourth Amendment. Although the court, citing EFF's amicus brief, recognized ALPRs capture massive amounts of data on Americans across the country, it decided not to reach the search issue.

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Woman convicted of attack on pregnant woman loses latest appeal
A woman convicted of second-degree murder for ramming her SUV into a pregnant woman - whose baby did not survive - following a confrontation in South Los Angeles over a man with whom they were both romantically involved lost her latest appeal, court papers obtained Friday show. Monica Mercado is not eligible for re-sentencing as a result of a change in state law since she was sentenced to 32 years to life in state prison in 2010, according to the ruling released Thursday by a three-justice panel from California's 2nd District Court of Appeal.
My News LA

Supreme Court tosses out convictions in Bridgegate case
The Supreme Court on Thursday threw out the convictions of two key players in the so-called Bridgegate case that rocked the administration of former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. Bridget Anne Kelly, a former Christie aide, and Bill Baroni, the former deputy executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which controls the George Washington Bridge, were found guilty in 2016 after a jury determined that they had shut down two of three lanes leading to the bridge, resulting in a monumental traffic jam in Fort Lee, New Jersey.
NBC News

U.S. journalist Daniel Pearl's parents challenge freeing of his convicted killers
Slain U.S. journalist Daniel Pearl's parents have petitioned to the Pakistani Supreme Court seeking to overturn a ruling that freed four men who had been convicted in 2002 of involvement in his killing, their lawyer said on Saturday. "We're standing up for justice, not only for our son, but for all our dear friends in Pakistan so they can live in a society free of violence and terrorism," Pearl's father Judea said in an emotional video message posted on Twitter.
Reuters

Four blacks among new judicial appointments - increasing courtroom diversity in California
On Tuesday, April 28, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom made 14 new appointments to the position of Superior Court Judge, including two in Alameda County, three in Los Angeles County, two in Orange County, two in Sacramento County, one in San Bernardino County, two in San Mateo County, one in Santa Clara County, and one in Yolo County. Each of California's 58 counties has a single superior court within their jurisdictions.
Black Voice News

Prosecutor appointed U.S. magistrate judge in L.A. federal court
A former federal prosecutor has been appointed to the U.S. District

Court for the Central District of California as a magistrate judge, the court announced Monday. Patricia Donahue, who was sworn in May 4, will sit in Los Angeles in the court's Western Division. Donahue succeeds former U.S. Magistrate Judge Frederick F. Mumm. Donahue served as an assistant U.S. attorney in Los Angeles since 1991.
My News LA

Prosecutors

Florida man charged with capital murder for fatal shooting at motel in 1984
A man was charged today with the fatal shooting of a 40-year-old man inside a Lennox-area motel more than 35 years ago, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced. Manuel Fraga-Madan of Hialeah, Fla., was charged in case BA486958 with one count of murder with the special circumstance allegations of robbery, rape, burglary, lying in wait and torture, making his eligible for the death penalty.
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office News Release

Kern County prosecutor gives reassuring message after O.C. releases seven "high risk" sex offenders
The Orange County District Attorney's Office has issued a warning that seven high-risk registered sex offenders were released from jail in Anaheim just days after being arrested. The county's district attorney says each man was charged with either tampering with their ankle monitoring device or violating parole. To be clear, these men have already served their time for their sexual offenses.
KGET Bakersfield

U.S. fights separate trial for Loughlin, others in college scam
Prosecutors say "Full House" actor Lori Loughlin, former TPG private equity executive Bill McGlashan and 11 other parents shouldn't be tried separately because they are all accused of cheating to get their kids into elite schools. The U.S. Attorney in Boston rejected an argument that parents would face prejudicial "spillover" if they are tried together. Andrew Lelling, who brought the case, scoffed at the request for as many as 11 separate trials noting that the court has already divided them into two separate groups.
Bloomberg

California accuses gasoline companies of price gouging
The state of California accused two oil and gas companies of working together to keep gas prices artificially high for the state's consumers in a lawsuit filed Monday. California Attorney General Xavier Becerra said gasoline companies SK Energy Americas and Vitol engaged in a scheme that used the explosion at the oil refinery in the Southern California city of Torrance to manipulate gas prices at the pump via a convoluted series of concealed trades on futures markets.
Courthouse News Service

Two Marines and one sailor indicted in nationwide pain cream fraud plot
Two Marines and a sailor from a military base in Southern California have been indicted in a cross-country health care fraud scheme that used Tennessee doctors to dupe the military out of $65 million. Marines Jeremy Syto and Daniel Castro and U.S. Navy member Kyle Adams pleaded not guilty to all charges at their first court appearance on Friday and were each released on $25,000 bonds.
Nashville Tennessean

Op-Ed: I'm keeping San Francisco safer by emptying the jail. My father should be freed too
I am the district attorney in San Francisco, and my job is to keep the public safe. In mid-March, I started emptying out our city and county jail because those living and working there face a grave risk of falling ill, dying and spreading COVID-19. My sense of urgency about this issue is professional, and it's also personal: My 75-year-old father lives in a prison cell.
Los Angeles Times

LA joins lawsuit claiming Uber and Lyft abused gig worker system
The top attorneys for the state's largest cities joined California Attorney General Xavier Becerra this week to announce a lawsuit against Uber and Lyft, claiming the ride-hailing companies misclassified their drivers as independent contractors instead of employees. Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer joined Becerra and the city attorneys of San Diego and San Francisco in the lawsuit.
City News Service

Policy/ Legal Issues

Should accomplices serve time for murder? Local prosecutors to challenge recent law
Ventura County prosecutors plan to petition the state's highest court to review a 2018 law that changes the circumstances for accomplices to be convicted of felony murder. Known as Senate Bill 1437, the law spells out specific circumstances that must be satisfied for such a conviction to stand. Before the law, people could have been convicted of felony murder if they were involved in a robbery, for example, where a person was killed - even if they didn't do the actual killing.
Ventura County Star

SF should close a jail, and not send inmates to Alameda County
Let's not waste this pandemic. Let's further criminal justice reform by accelerating the closure of County Jail 4 (at the Hall of Justice) and reject any plan to transfer San Francisco inmates to the Santa Rita Jail in Alameda County, a decision awaiting consideration at the Board of

Supervisors. Sending inmates away is more than just the high cost of housing and transportation to a jail renowned for unsafe practices and the risk of inmate harm, it's an abdication of San Francisco's responsibility to reintegrate inmates back into their families and communities, thereby reducing recidivism.
San Francisco Chronicle

Fired Oakland Police Chief Anne Kirkpatrick files whistleblower complaint against city
Two months after her ouster, former Oakland Police Chief Anne Kirkpatrick on Wednesday officially filed a complaint against the city she was once sworn to protect, alleging that she was fired in retaliation for blowing the whistle on the department's Police Commission. The complaint alleges that commissioners routinely sought access to police personnel records, asked for special treatment in their personal affairs and "frequently abuse OPD staff and interfere in day-to-day operations."
San Francisco Chronicle

College sexual assault rules changed to give more rights to accused
The Trump administration released new rules Wednesday for how universities should address allegations of sexual assault or misconduct, sparking backlash from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and others who say the changes weaken protections for survivors. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos announced the new regulations that narrow the definition of sexual harassment and guide how schools must handle investigations into sexual harassment allegations.
Courthouse News Service

Ventura County Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee shows increase in crime as a result of COVID-19 'zero bail'
The Ventura County Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (VCLECC), a group of law enforcement agencies throughout Ventura County including municipal chiefs of police, sheriff and district attorney, has illustrated some serious, negative consequences occurring as a result of the recently approved $0 bail system for COVID-19. They, therefore, urge the Judicial Council to modify the zero bail rule in order to better protect the community.
KEYT Ventura County

Los Angeles County/City

L.A. County Sheriff's Department complains about budget cuts on Twitter, asks public to contact supervisors
Three days after announcing a number of budget cuts, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department urged residents Thursday to call the county's Board of Supervisors to voice concerns about the impact on communities. In a series of tweets Thursday morning, the department outlined closures and cuts that would be made as its $3.9 billion in costs

were cut down to $3.5 billion for fiscal year 2020 to 2021.
KTLA

LA Sheriff Villanueva subpoenaed over jail coronavirus policy
The civilian panel that oversees the L.A. County Sheriff's Department used its new subpoena power for the first time today, issuing a subpoena demanding Sheriff Alex Villanueva testify about his agency's efforts to protect jail inmates from coronavirus. The Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission issued the subpoena amid growing concerns that COVID-19 is spreading rapidly inside the jails.
LAist

Off-duty LAPD officer accused of shooting fellow officer during camping trip (Video)
Two off-duty Los Angeles Police Department officers were detained Sunday after a third LAPD officer was shot and injured at a camp site in an unincorporated area near Apple Valley in San Bernardino County, multiple law enforcement sources told NBC News. Eric Leonard reports for the NBC4 I-Team on Monday, May 4, 2020.
NBC4 Los Angeles

LAPD officer in violent Boyle Heights confrontation previously shot three people
The LAPD officer recorded on cellphone video repeatedly punching a man during an arrest in Boyle Heights previously shot three people in three separate incidents, including the 2010 killing of a day laborer near downtown LA that prompted three days of public demonstrations and unrest. Officer Frank A. Hernandez was named in lawsuits as a result of at least two of those shootings, both alleging civil rights violations and excessive force.
NBC4 Los Angeles

Coronavirus: Sheriff's stations in Altadena, Marina Del Rey will close July 1 to save $12.2M
Two Los Angeles County sheriff's patrol stations will need to be closed because of budget cuts, Sheriff Alex Villanueva announced Monday. Patrol stations in Altadena and Marina del Rey will be closed effective July 1 to save $12.2 million, the sheriff said in a news conference. Those communities will not be left without any law enforcement, however. Altadena will be patrolled by the Crescenta Valley Patrol Station, and Marina deputies will report to the South Los Angeles Patrol Station.
CBS LA

Barger 'disappointed' with sheriff's decision to close station in Altadena
Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger told Pasadena Now she was "disappointed" in Sheriff Alex Villanueva's decision to close the sheriff's station in Altadena. "The Chief Executive Office has provided the Sheriff's Department with guidance and suggestions for appropriate

budget cuts that would not impact public safety or community service, such as limited overtime and scaling back academy classes. I am disappointed that instead of more sensible adjustments, he is responding by eliminating sheriff's stations, including in Altadena, an unincorporated area that I represent."
Pasadena Now

Photos taken at Kobe Bryant crash site should be against the law, California lawmaker says
Outraged by allegations that Los Angeles sheriff's deputies shared photos from the site of a helicopter crash that killed Lakers star Kobe Bryant, his daughter and seven others, a California lawmaker wants to make it a crime for law enforcement officers to take unauthorized photographs of those killed in accidents and crimes.
Los Angeles Times

Measure A reveals a new glitch in county's new voting system: Costly recounts
Los Angeles County's new voting system has taken a lot of flak after voting centers on election night were overwhelmed with long lines and technical glitches. Add another complaint to the list: Recounts requested by the public have become more expensive and cumbersome due to the fact that voters can cast ballots anywhere in the county. And Measure A, an indefinite extension of Long Beach's sales tax passed in 2016, has become a test case for recounts under the new system.
Long Beach Post

SoCal ACLU sues Orange County Sheriff to reduce inmate population during coronavirus pandemic
The ACLU of Southern California filed a federal lawsuit Thursday against the Orange County Sheriff in an attempt to reduce the jail population during the coronavirus pandemic. The lawsuit demands immediate release of "vulnerable and disabled" inmates, better social distancing protocols, and increases in care, testing, and personal protective equipment. On Thursday, the sheriff's department reported 122 inmates and three deputies have tested positive for the virus.
CBS LA

Public health mandates to be enforced by sheriff's deputies
Seeking to be proactive in protecting its bus drivers and the public, the Antelope Valley Transit Authority will begin including Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies on buses to enforce public health mandates. Other public transit entities have had issues of riders loitering or otherwise causing problems, issues AVTA officials want to avoid.
Antelope Valley Press

At virtual meetings, L.A. County board continues to limit public comment to email, mail
After seven weeks of working on a way to safely convene public

meetings, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors met by teleconference again on Tuesday, April 28, restricting public comment to email and mail and insisting it is in compliance with relaxed Brown Act requirements. Other governmental bodies, including city councils ranging from Los Angeles to El Monte, and even small neighborhood councils, allow residents to comment in real time on policy matters under consideration.
City News Service

L.A. probation report details fight to stop sexual exploitation of children
The Los Angeles County Probation Department has been a leader across the county, state and nation in the fight against the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for underage youth has not waivered and the department continues to be at the forefront battling the recent increase of cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children, or CSEC.
Press Release

Coronavirus: Who's on L.A. County's reopening task force? The initial names are in
As Los Angeles County officials launch the easing of stay-home orders on Friday, May 8, a team of more than a dozen leaders from the county's education, business, government and non-profit landscapes will pull together an urgent plan to get Los Angeles County's economy up and running amid the novel coronavirus crisis. The county's new Economic Resiliency Task Force - meeting for the first time Friday - will include leaders from a swath of the region's business, labor and cultural landscape.
Los Angeles Daily News

Official warns L.A. homeless settlement will be hard work, but declares: 'It's worth it'
Settlement talks that could lead to a federal court-supervised plan aimed at ending homelessness in Los Angeles County - where nearly 60,000 are on the streets or living in shelters - launched Thursday, May 7 with well wishes from the city of Whittier, which has already arrived at its own settlement. For all parties to come to an agreement, it will take some time and some doing, said Whittier Mayor Joe Vinatieri, who represents a city where the population is around 85,000 - just a few thousand more people than are homeless across the county.
Los Angeles Daily News

Consumer

Judge orders O.C. company to stop making unapproved hand sanitizer claims
A judge ordered a Lake Forest hand sanitizer company to stop claiming its products can protect against specific diseases without federal

approval after the owners of Purell filed a complaint, but he also slammed the multi-national brand for similar conduct. Innovative BioDefense Inc. (IBD), the firm's CEO Colette Cozean and distributor Hotan Barough must cease the sale of the company's "Zylast" line of products until they remove claims that it can prevent infection by certain pathogens from its packaging.
Orange County Register

State AGs send warning to nationwide CRAs and furnishers regarding FCRA enforcement
Twenty-one state attorneys general and the District of Columbia attorney general have sent a letter to the three nationwide consumer reporting agencies (CRAs) "to remind them" of their legal obligations under federal and state law as well as under agreements between the AGs and the CRAs entered into in 2015. The letter appears intended to serve as a warning to the CRAs that they should not take comfort from the CFPB's "recent announcement suggest[ing] that it will not enforce the FCRA's 30- or 45-day deadline to investigate consumer disputes requirements during the COVID-19 crisis."
JD Supra

White House identifies Amazon foreign domains as "notorious markets" for counterfeit goods
As we have previously advised, the Trump Administration is targeting the sale of counterfeit goods on e-commerce platforms. Early this year, the Department of Homeland Security issued its report to the White House on "Combating Trafficking in Counterfeit and Pirated Goods," in response to which the White House entered its Executive Order aimed at blocking the sale of contraband and counterfeit goods online to U.S. customers.
Ad Law Access

Public Safety/Crime

Man in Glendora arrested, released three times in one day due to emergency policy
A man was arrested and released three times in one day due to the state's zero-dollar bail policy for smaller crimes, Glendora police announced Friday. Monterey Park resident Dijon Landrum was arrested after stealing a vehicle from East Los Angeles on Wednesday morning, police said in a news release, adding he was also found with other stolen property and narcotics. However, because of a policy from California's Judicial Council that sets bail at zero for most misdemeanors and minor felonies, Landrum was only cited and released.
NBC4 Los Angeles

Sex offender released early from Orange County jail allegedly exposes self at parole center
A sex offender recently released early from jail was arrested Thursday

after allegedly exposing himself at a parole resource center and failing to charge his GPS monitor. "High-risk registered sex offender'' Rudy William Grajeda Magdaleno, 39, was granted release in court and left jail on April 13 after serving 71 days of the 180-day minimum sentence, according to the Orange County District Attorney's Office and the Santa Ana Police Department.
City News Service

UCLA police report sexual assault
Campus police at UCLA are looking for a suspect who allegedly sexually assaulted a student outside an off-campus apartment over the weekend. It took place at around 5:20 p.m. Saturday in the 800 block of Levering Avenue, where "the suspect approached the victim near the entrance of her apartment and grabbed her buttocks," according to a crime alert issued by the UCLA Police Department. The suspect was described as a white male in his 30s with blond hair, facial hair, approximately 6-feet tall, and wearing a grey hoodie.
My News LA

Crime statistics for Long Beach show overall decline in March, increases in some property crimes
The Long Beach Police Department (LBPD) released its crime statistics recently for the month of March, which showed a 3.5% reduction in violent crime and a .5% reduction in property crime when compared to last year. The restrictions on public gatherings in efforts to slow the spread of coronavirus may have played a role in the reduced volume of crime overall, however, a closer look at the data shows that some crimes have spiked this year.
Signal Tribune

Veteran Redding police officer arrested in connection to marijuana warehouse, officials announce
A Redding police corporal was arrested last week after authorities found a warehouse with marijuana, cocaine and nearly $60,000 in cash. Cpl. Will Williams, 53, was one of three people arrested by the California Highway Patrol as part of an investigation. The other two were identified as Redding residents Heather Legault, 40, and Michael Gray, 39, according to a CHP press release.
Redding Record Searchlight

Coronavirus undercuts LAPD recruitment just as a decline in black officers looms
Leaders of the Los Angeles Police Department are growing increasingly concerned about a looming decline in black officers on the force, particularly as pandemic-related restrictions on recruitment undercut their efforts to turn the tide. "That makes it really tough, with us being hampered by COVID-19 and unable to go out and do business as we normally do business," said Capt. Aaron McCraney, commanding officer

of the LAPD's recruitment and employment division.
Los Angeles Times

California/National

Amid pandemic, ICE arrests in Los Angeles drop by about 65%
Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers have made significantly fewer arrests in the Los Angeles area over the last month, after the agency announced a shift in focus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ICE made about 65% fewer arrests in the L.A. area in April than it did in March, according to the agency. ICE recorded 230 arrests in March, compared with approximately 80 arrests in April.
Los Angeles Times

Did Riverside County place foster kids with man later convicted in molestation, child porn case?
He gave Riverside County social workers a bad vibe. The man's home was filthy and he seemed overly affectionate toward an 8-year-old boy, the staff noted. But he worked at a school district and was willing to take difficult placements. Plus he threatened to sue the county if it wouldn't let him take in kids. There was talk of county employees giving him older children - who would know enough to sound the alarm "if something happened."
Riverside Press-Enterprise

Some local juvenile detention numbers drop, while coronavirus cases inside youth lockups climb
A survey of juvenile justice agencies in 30 states showed a 24 percent decrease in the local juvenile detention population - from 3,713 to 2,828, between March 1 and April 1, 2020, as the pandemic came into focus and government leaders took action to slow the virus's spread. The survey, conducted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, along with the Pretrial Justice Institute and Empact Solutions, found that the population reduction could mostly be attributed to a 29 percent drop in daily admissions.
Witness LA

FBI releases report on 2019 active shooter incidents
The FBI has released its report on active shooter incidents in 2019. According to the bureau's report, 28 shootings were designated as active shooter incidents, an increase of one from the previous year. In total, there were 97 fatalities and 150 wounded, not including the shooters. The report found that 30 shooters carried out the 28 incidents, up from 27 shooters in 2018. In 2019, there were two law enforcement officers killed and 15 wounded while responding to the active shooter incidents listed in the report.
PoliceOne

Police reform advocates demand LAPD stop using CalGang

database
Police reform advocates on Tuesday demanded the Los Angeles Police Department stop using a statewide database for identifying and tracking gang members, arguing it has undermined public safety and derailed the lives of innocent people. The advocates told members of the Los Angeles Police Commission that they are not only concerned with the allegations of overt abuses of the CalGang database by officers, but with the system overall.
Los Angeles Times

Corrections/Parole/Convictions

4 inmates at 3 California prisons killed in 21 hours; 8 facing charges
Four inmates were killed at three state prisons within a 21-hour span, according to officials with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. All four were serving life sentences for murder. Two of the attacks happened at the same facility. Corrections officials said Robert Hargrave, 48, was attacked in the rec yard at Kern Valley State Prison on the afternoon of April 30.
Fox6 Now Milwaukee

Convicted murderer from Riverside County killed in prison attack
An investigation was underway Friday into the fatal stabbing of a convicted murderer from Riverside County at a Central California penitentiary. Guards responding to a fight at Kern Valley State Prison in Delano found a pair of inmates attacking Robert Hargrave, 48, with makeshift weapons about 1:30 p.m. Thursday, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation reported.
City News Service

Elderly inmate beaten to death at Vacaville prison medical facility; cellmate accused
An elderly inmate serving a life sentence for second-degree murder was apparently beaten to death inside his cell at California Medical Facility prison in Vacaville and his cellmate was accused of the homicide. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) said 75-year-old Tuc X. Tran was found unresponsive in his cell with multiple injuries to his head and face on April 30 by a corrections officer conducting an inmate count.
CBS SF

Convicted Davis killer denied parole
A Board of Parole Hearings panel denied release this week to a former Bay Area man who is serving a 20-year state prison term for his role in a 2004 South Davis homicide, according to the Yolo County District Attorney's Office. It was the first parole hearing for Eric Steven Chase Jr., now 37, who remains incarcerated at California State Prison Solano in Vacaville.

Davis Enterprise

Newport Beach man found guilty of killing toddler set free on verge of death
A Newport Beach man who killed a 22-month-old boy has been released from prison, but with the clock ticking on his own life. Brian Laudenback, 58, was given a recall of sentence, with a three-judge appellate panel ruling that Laudenback should be placed in the care of his mother. Under California Penal Code 1170, a court can recall a sentence if the prisoner is terminally ill and is expected to die within six months.
Los Angeles Times

Convicted Napa child molester serving life sentence denied parole
A man serving a 385-year prison sentence for a child sexual abuse case in Napa more than a quarter century ago has been denied release by a California parole board, according to the Napa County District Attorney's Office. In a videoconference hearing, the Board of Parole Hearings ruled that Ronald Eugene Hoffman, 67, must remain behind bars for the molestation of three children, the office of District Attorney Allison Haley announced Wednesday in a news release.
Napa Valley Register

California court overturns manslaughter conviction in Pittsburg ice cream parlor shooting
Citing errors by the trial judge and prosecutor, a California appeals court ruled that a man convicted of manslaughter in a 2017 shooting death outside of a Pittsburg ice cream parlor didn't receive a fair trial. The First District Appellate Court decision, issued last week, reversed a manslaughter conviction for 22-year-old Larry Neal, of Antioch. In 2018, a jury acquitted Neal on a murder charge but convicted him of manslaughter in the shooting death of Robert Hopkins Jr., 43, of Bethel Island.
East Bay Times

Ronnie Ortiz-Magro avoids jail time with new plea deal in Jen Harley domestic violence case
Jersey Shore: Family Vacation star Ronnie Ortiz-Magro avoided jail time after negotiating a plea deal in his domestic violence case with Jen Harley, In Touch can confirm. According to Rob Wilcox, spokesman for the L.A. City Attorney's Office, the TV personality pleaded no contest to one count of domestic battery and one count of resisting arrest. Even with his plea deal, the 34-year-old Nevada resident still isn't out of the woods yet, as he must do 30 days of community labor in the state and complete 36 months of probation.
In Touch Weekly

California man convicted in racially motivated killings likely faces life in prison

The sanity phase of a trial for a California man convicted of fatally shooting three men in a racially motivated rampage that targeted white men did not take place as scheduled this week after the suspect withdrew his insanity plea, authorities said. Fresno County District Attorney Lisa A. Smittcamp announced last Friday that the withdrawal of the plea means Kori Ali Muhammad is expected to be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole when he is sentenced next month.
NBC News

High desert man who robbed eight Southern California banks during a six-week spree sentenced to over 7 years in federal prison
A San Bernardino County man who threatened to shoot tellers and others when he robbed eight banks in Southern California over a six-week span was sentenced today to 92 months in federal prison. Gregory Walter Barnes, 40, of Piñon Hills, was sentenced by United States District Judge Michael W. Fitzgerald, who also ordered Barnes to pay $41,931 in restitution. Barnes pleaded guilty on February 10 to one count of bank robbery.
Department of Justice/Central District of California

Articles of Interest

How profit and incompetence delayed N95 masks while people died at the VA
Before embarking on a 36-hour tour through an underground of contractors and middlemen trying to make a buck on the nation's desperate need for masks, entrepreneur Robert Stewart Jr. offered an unusual caveat. "I'm talking with you against the advice of my attorney," the man in the shiny gray suit, an American Flag button with the word "VETERAN" pinned to his blazer, said as we boarded a private jet Saturday from the executive wing at Dulles International Airport.
ProPublica

Internet domain watchdog rejects sale of dot-org to private equity firm
The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) rejected the proposed sale of the dot-org domain, a decision hailed as a victory by nonprofits wary of a private equity firm assuming control over online civic space. ICANN board chairman Maarten Botterman announced the results of its vote in a blog post Thursday evening. "After completing its evaluation, the ICANN Board finds that the public interest is better served in withholding consent as a result of various factors that create unacceptable uncertainty over the future of the third largest gTLD registry," he said, abbreviating the term generic top-level domain.
Courthouse News Service

Seventh Circuit sides with Budweiser in advertising beef with

Miller
Anheuser-Busch cannot be prevented from making advertising claims about Miller's use of corn syrup in Miller Lite beer when Miller itself lists the sweetener on its beer's ingredients list, the Seventh Circuit ruled Friday. MillerCoors, which produces Miller Lite and Coors Light, Bud Light's main competition, sued Anheuser-Busch in federal court last March over an ad it ran during Super Bowl LIII accusing Miller and Coors of having corn syrup in them.
Courthouse News Service

California readying rules for automated vehicle ride-hailing
California's first-ever Autonomous Vehicle (AV) Passenger Service Pilot Program (AV Pilot) is underway. This means that someone near you could potentially be hailing a ride from an automated vehicle rather than a taxi or ride-hail driven by a human being. But the state is also currently wrestling with how to move the AV Pilot Program to the next phase. It is also considering which rules need to be strengthened or changed to protect public safety, accessibility, and the environment.
StreetsblogCal

Quincy Jones vs. Michael Jackson estate: Court strips Jones of $9.4 million in royalties
A legal battle between two superstars - aging music producer Quincy Jones and the late Michael Jackson - was upended Tuesday by a California appeals court. The case, in which Jones and the Jackson estate are fighting over the producer's claims to millions in royalties, hit a roadblock after the California Court of Appeal reversed a $9.4 million judgment in Jones' favor.
USA Today

Pensions

Pension-spiking showdown at California Supreme Court
The California Supreme Court will hear arguments Tuesday on whether to strike down pension spiking in two Bay Area counties in a case that might significantly affect future taxpayer costs for public employee retirement plans across the state. With state and local governments crippled by escalating pension costs and badly underfunded retirement plans, and with the problem exacerbated by the current coronavirus recession, now is the time for the high court to set some reasonable boundaries.
Mercury News & East Bay Times

Orange County cities are facing a financial mess
The latest state budget forecasts are expectedly grim, with finance officials predicting revenue in the last quarter to be down an eye-popping 61 percent. But the COVID-19 related economic devastation isn't confined only to the state general fund. It is wreaking havoc on local government finances in Orange County and across California. The

most direct cause of local problems is a precipitous drop in sales- and hotel-tax revenue. With many stores and hotels closed, cities are losing a huge part of their discretionary revenue.
Orange County Register

US state pension system hit hard by coronavirus pandemic
The financial strength of the US state pension system has deteriorated to its weakest position in at least three decades as a result of the market turmoil unleashed by the coronavirus pandemic. The aggregate funded ratio for US state pension plans dropped 12.2 percentage points during the first quarter to 62.6 per cent, according to Wilshire Consulting, the investment advice and research provider.
Financial Times

A state pension bailout even Mitch McConnell can support
Last week Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he opposes additional aid for state and local governments in future coronavirus relief bills because these governments would use federal funds to simply bail out their struggling pensions. McConnell believes many states have badly mismanaged their pensions and favors "allowing states to use the bankruptcy route" to deal with their underfunded public pension liabilities.
Forbes

Economic downturn could hit public pension funds hard
State officials in charge of overseeing pensions and health plans for more than 49,000 government retirees are hoping their combined $20 billion in investments can get back on track as the coronavirus scrambles the state's budget priorities and sends the global economy reeling. The retirement funds lost millions in March, but recovered most of that after markets swung up in April. But even with that immediate threat over, the retirement funds still face a cloudy horizon.
Civil Beat

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Association of Deputy District Attorneys, 515 S. Flower St., 18th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90071

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